

Message Text

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ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 OMB-01 BIB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-05 NSAE-00 PA-01 RSC-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02

PM-03 NSC-05 SS-15 L-02 /061 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2269

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS PINT ET

SUBJECT: RVOG IN CRISIS (CONTINUED)

REF: ADDIS 14568

SOURCE OF INFORMATION REPORTED REFTEL TELLS US SITUATION AT
RVOG NOW (DECEMBER 11) AS FOLLOWS:

1. STATION'S MANAGEMENT HAS STRONG IMPRESSION "DIRG" FEELS
INCREASINGLY UNEASY WITH RVOG. NOT ONLY HAD RVOG'S ETHIOPIAN
STRAIGHT NEWS COVERAGE, WHICH HAS DWINDLED TO JUST ABOUT ZERO,
UPSET THE AUTHORITIES BUT REDUCTION OF THAT NEWS COVERAGE FOLLOW-
ING INCIDENTS REPORTED PREVIOUS MESSAGES THIS SUBJECT NOW ADDING
TO "DIRG'S" DISQUIET.

2. QUESTION OF LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION (LWF) AND WORLD
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC) CONDEMNATION OF NOVEMBER 23 MASSACRE
REPORTEDLY NOW ON BACK BURNER. (IT NOT CLEAR TO US WHETHER "DIRG"
FINALLY RULED ON WHETHER STATEMENTS THESE ORGANIZATIONS CAN OR
CANNOT BE BROADCAST.) RVOG DESCRIBED AS BEING "IN HOLDING
PATTERN." REASON REPORTEDLY IS THAT LOCAL (LUTHERAN) MEKANE
YESSUS CHURCH, WHICH OWNS LAND ON WHICH RVOG STANDS, HAS ASKED
RVOG MANAGEMENT FOR TIME IN WHICH TO "DISASSOCIATE ITSELF" FROM
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ANY ACTION WHICH RVOG MAY CHOOSE TO TAKE IN ITS CURRENT SITUA-

TION. ACCORDING SOURCE, IF RVOG FORMALLY REMOVES ITS NEWS PROGRAM-
ING OR CLOSES STATION "THEY WILL COME AND ARREST LEADING MEMBERS
OF MEKANE YESSUS CHURCH."

3. RVOG HAS AGREED TO PROVIDE CHURCH TIME IN WHICH TO
DELIVER A LETTER TO THE AUTHORITIES TO THE END. MEANWHILE,
RVOG NEGOTIATOR, DR. HELBERG, HAS RETURNED TO GENEVA TO
CONSULT WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE LWF. HELBERG IS EXPECTED
EITHER TO RETURN TO ADDIS WITH LWF'S DECISION CONCERNING FUTURE
OF RVOG NEXT WEEK OR ELSE LWF MAY PUBLICIZE ITS DECISION FROM
ITS GENEVA OFFICE AT THAT TIME.

4. SOURCE CHARACTERIZED "DIRG'S" ATTITUDE AS EXCEEDINGLY
JUMPY. ACCORDING SOURCE, "DIRG" SEEMS TO BELIEVE THAT RVOG
MAY BE ATTEMPTING UNDERMINE THE MILITARY MOVEMENT OR MAY BE
HARBORING INTELLIGENCE OPERATIVES. HEAVY PREDOMINANCE OF
ERITREANS AMONG RVOG'S ETHIOPIAN EMPLOYEES IS ALSO A FACTOR,
AS "DIRG" APPEARS CURRENTLY TO SEE ALL NORTHERNERS AS A THREAT.
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